

Lana Gordon, Secretary

Sam Brownback, Governor

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Illinois Woman Sentenced for Unemployment Fraud Case Involving Kansas Benefits

TOPEKA, Kan. - The Kansas Department of Labor (KDOL) assisted federal authorities with the investigation and prosecution of a Chicago woman who has been sentenced to six years in federal prison for operating a federal income tax fraud scheme as well as one of the largest fictitious employer unemployment fraud schemes ever prosecuted nationwide.

The defendant, Jacqueline Kennedy, who owned a Chicago based tax preparation business, engaged in a scheme to falsely claim federal tax refunds and, together with 15 co-defendants, engaged in a related scheme using the identities of other individuals, including some of her tax service clients, to fraudulently obtain millions of dollars from state unemployment insurance agencies. In total, Kennedy and co-defendants filed state unemployment insurance claims in Kansas, as well as in Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, and Oklahoma amounting to approximately \$9.1 million.

Under Secretary Lana Gordon, KDOL has taken an active role in detecting, investigating and preventing unemployment fraud in Kansas. During the 2013 legislative session, Kansas enacted the most aggressive unemployment fraud measure in state history. Certain specially trained KDOL investigators are now law enforcement officers, and people who commit unemployment fraud are now prohibited from receiving benefits for five years and face a 25 percent monetary penalty in addition to the amount defrauded.

“One of my goals as Secretary of Labor is combating fraud,” said Secretary Gordon. “We want to protect the unemployment trust fund for those who are truly in need, not for criminals that prey on government benefit programs.”

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